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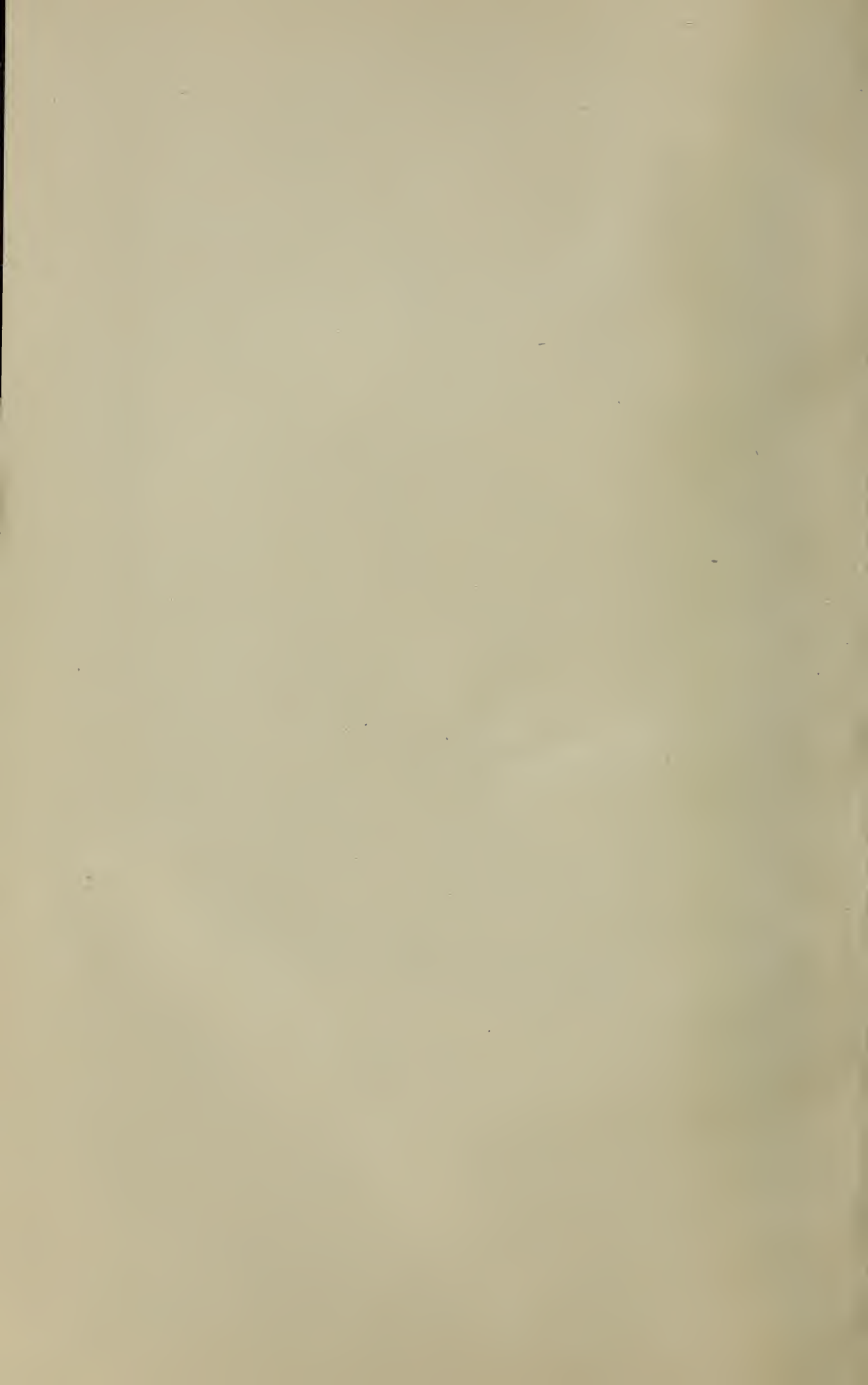
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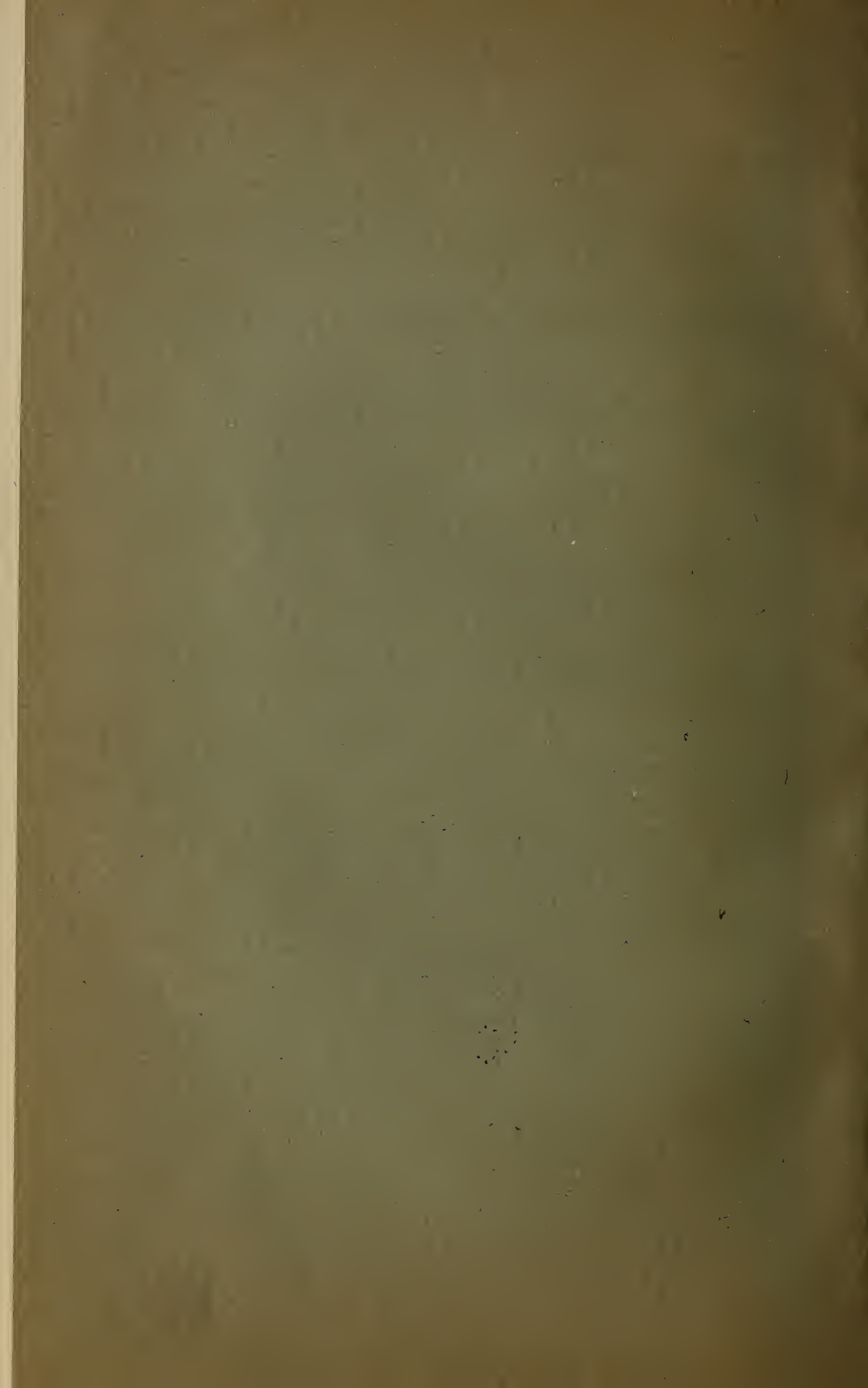
STAMMERING AND ITS EXTIRPATION

BY

ERNEST TOMPKINS

Los Angeles, California

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STAMMERING AND ITS EXTIRPATION

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By ERNEST TOMPKINS, Los Angeles, California

The Difference Between Stuttering and Stammering.—In the English language, as the words are generally used, stuttering is habitual repetition and stammering is spasmodic abortive speech. However, stammerers sometimes resort to stuttering before a feared word. The distinguishing difference between stuttering and stammering is that stuttering is under the control of the will and stammering is not, except to decline to indulge in it. Stuttering is found almost exclusively in children soon after they have learned to talk, although some adults stutter slightly through carelessness in speech. Uncorrected stuttering soon develops into stammering. In the transition stage the stuttering is still noticeable, but it soon disappears, and the disorder becomes wholly uncontrollable, except to desist from it.

Some American speech specialists have confused the meaning of the words "stuttering" and "stammering" by using them somewhat in the sense of the German words *Stammeln*, baby talk, and *Stottern*, stammering.

The Stammerer Can Say What He Thinks He Cannot Say.—Some years ago I was on a horse car in Troy, N. Y., going toward Albia, and the car stopped at the switch near the junction of Congress and Ferry Streets. While we waited for the other car to pass us, the conductor called to a four-year-old boy on the stoop of Nagengast's store, "Who gave you a penny yesterday?" The boy replied, "Ma, ma, ma, ma, ma, ma, Ma." The marked emphasis on the last syllable was accompanied by a shake of the head as if to shake the syllable out.

Before I comment on this incident, I want to call to the reader's attention the importance of the incident itself, and the importance of drawing only correct conclusions from it. The incident involves stammering on a word in which both syllables are alike, by a stammerer in his natural environment, in the presence of numerous witnesses, and of an observer familiar with stammering. It is evident that such a combination of circumstances can occur only rarely. If

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the combination was of frequent occurrence the cause of stammering would probably have been discovered long ago.

Was the child really a stammerer? Yes. The audible and visible emphasis on the last syllable is the spasm that characterizes stammering. If the child had failed to utter the last syllable or had failed to say all of it, the evidence that he was a stammerer would have been indisputable; but complete failure to say a syllable is not necessary for stammering, so to dispute that this was stammering would be only to stand on an untenable technicality.

Granting then that this child was a stammerer, we see without any assumptions:—

1. He said what he wanted to say when he had uttered two syllables.

2. He thought that he could not say what he wanted to say, or he would have discontinued after he had said two syllables.

Therefore, since 1. cannot be disputed, the thought that he could not say what he wanted to say was erroneous. In other words, he could say what he wanted to say at the time he thought he could not say it. It is well known that the stammerer can say on some occasions what he fails to say on other occasions; but I believe it has never before been proved definitely that a stammerer can at the same time say what he thinks he cannot say.

Further analysis of the case results in the same conclusion; but we have to make an assumption, namely, that the child thought that he could not say the second syllable of the word, so he repeated the first syllable until he had the courage to try the second, and then “jumped” at that in order to force it out. I think that no one who is familiar with stammering will question this assumption.

This shows that the child was actually saying “ma” all the time he thought he could not say it. Moreover, it is evident to any careful observer of stammering that if the child had used slightly more force on the last syllable, he would have failed to completely utter that; so the child would have been in the anomalous condition of actually saying what he actually failed to say. The inevitable conclusion, viewed from any angle, is, that the ability to say what he desired to say was constantly present, and that the idea of inability was totally erroneous.

The instance given is valuable as showing the origin of stammering. The child had acquired the habit of stuttering; ridicule was prompting him to make a conscious effort to speak correctly; and this conscious effort, conflicting with

his normal speech, was making a stammerer of him. The beginning of his reply was stuttering, since it was repetition without effort; the ridicule was evident; and the stammering effort on the last syllable was both audible and visible. In my opinion, accurate observation will show that a large proportion of the stammerers start as stutterers. Stuttering is known to be a common habit among children; and the habit may become so fixed that the child will make a conscious effort to correct it instead of merely talking slowly. The failure to recognize stuttering as a cause of stammering is perfectly natural. The public has no definite idea of the difference, so it would consider that stammering began when the child started to stutter, and would look for another cause. The speech specialist, who is practically the only statistician of stammering, and not always a perfectly impartial one, asks the parent how the child became a stammerer. The parent has no definite explanation; so the specialist suggests the causes that he knows of—a blow on the head, a fright, an illness. Certainly the child has had something included in the list, so the parent concludes that the event of this description, which happened not long before the stammering was noticed, must have been the cause of the stammering, and the conclusion goes to build up the statistics of the subject.

Summary.—The stammerer is always able to talk. Stuttering is a cause, and probably an important cause, of stammering. Ridicule of stutterers makes stammerers of them.

Stammering Is a Conscious Effort at Speech.—Normal speech is automatic. No one knows how he speaks. Let anyone who questions that sit down and write out just what muscles are used and the exact sequence of their use in saying the word California. He will soon convince himself that he does not know how he talks. But since he does talk, and since he does not know how he talks, then he does not talk consciously, but must talk automatically.

Now it has been shown that the stammerer can say what he fears he cannot say. Also, it is recognized that he makes an effort to talk. But since he does not know how he talks the effort conflicts with his normal automatic speech, and he stammers. In other words, stammering is a conflict between normal speech and a conscious effort misdirected through ignorance of its proper direction.

The proof of the cause of stammering may be deduced from the known facts by pure reason, as follows:—

1. The stammerer's normal speech is automatic, so
2. He does not know how he speaks.

3. When he wills to speak, automatic speech begins, but
4. He makes a conscious effort at the same time, therefore,
5. The conscious effort *must* conflict with the automatic speech.

Although this proof shows that stammering must result from a conscious effort at speech, there may be some who will say that another cause is possible. Let us assume some other cause and see what the assumption leads us to. This cause must appear and disappear synchronously with stammering. But the changes from normal to abnormal speech are so rapid and hitherto unexplainable that not even one cause could be found that met the conditions, whereas we are now in the position of supplying two. Moreover, even the assumption of any particular cause was the result of a need of an explanation, whereas we now have a perfectly valid explanation. Therefore the assumed cause is an absurdity. Consequently there can be no other explanation of stammering than collision between normal and conscious speech.

Although the conclusion that stammering is a conscious effort at speech was reached through consideration of the "mama" incident, the reader should not think that it is based wholly or even considerably on that. I have tested the conclusion with every means at my command, and have never found it wanting; on the contrary, I have never found any other explanation that was not wanting. The deficiency of all other explanations of which I have ever heard, and the sufficiency of this one, appear to make it dependable. However, I will add some contributory evidence from recognized authorities.

Dr. Scripture says:—"The habit stage is often initiated by shock or exhaustion. The person finds himself making inaccurate movements and speaking a word or words indistinctly. On account of the excessive nervous irritability in these conditions, he feels that he cannot permit himself to speak in an improper fashion, so *he instinctively tries to correct the inaccurate movements by an extra effort* at distinctness. Such an effort produces excessive muscular tension This in turn impresses itself on the memory, so that when he again makes the same sounds, he naturally makes excessive muscular movements."

Excepting the conclusion, these words are almost the exact ones in which I explained the origin of stammering long before I ever heard of Dr. Scripture or of this quotation. My explanation is as follows: The child, through an accident or incident, suffers a temporary speech disturbance and makes a conscious effort to overcome that disturbance—

now notice the difference in the two explanations—but the conscious effort is *opposed* to normal speech instead of added to it. The incompleteness of Dr. Scripture's explanation is shown by the absence of a cause for speech stoppage; he merely accounts for excessive movement, whereas the opposition of movement, resulting in stoppage, is accounted for by my explanation.

Dr. Scripture says further: "Many a one will say that if he could only forget that he had stuttered he would never stutter again." (It should be noted that Dr. Scripture uses the word "stutter" with the meaning of the English word "stammer.") The explanation is that forgetfulness of the habit would eliminate the conscious effort, and normal speech would assert itself. He says again: "If the question is asked of a patient in the fright stage 'Why do you stutter,' he will answer, 'Because I am afraid that I will stutter.'" The fright induces the conscious effort at speech, which blocks the automatic speech and causes stammering.

Dr. Albert Liebmann, speaking to the stammerer, says: "*Mit der mechanischen Sprache habe ich positiv nichts zu thun, ich muss nur den Sprachapparat gewähren lassen, damit er nach seinen immanenten Gesetzen arbeiten kann.*" A translation of which is: I have nothing to do with my automatic speech; I must leave my speech organs free to operate according to their own inherent laws.

This is evidence that stammering is a conscious effort at speech, for we know that the stammerer makes the conscious effort and stammers, whereas Dr. Liebmann says he will talk freely if he does not interfere with his automatic speech. Dr. Liebmann is the one man of whom I know who is working consistently on the right principle.

Dr. Chervin's justly celebrated triad of stammering is:—

1. Begins in childhood.
2. Absent in singing and solitude.
3. Intermittent.

The singing question will be discussed later. Taking up the other questions, we find as follows:—1. Since stammering is a conscious effort at speech, it cannot occur before the child has learned to talk, as items 2 and 3 show. After the child has learned to talk, faulty speech occurs from the habit of repeating words—simple stuttering—from imitating stutterers or stammerers, from fright or from illness. The latter cases are explained as follows: When the child is recovering from the fright or illness, control of the will returns before control of the speech organs, and the child, noticing its deficiency, makes a conscious effort to speak;

but this effort, being misdirected, is a stammer, so the child believes it cannot talk properly. Once this false belief is instilled in the child, it will stammer; for it will make the conscious effort to overcome the difficulty.

Consider the absence of stammering in solitude, the last part of the second item of the triad. This is explainable on the grounds that since the stammerer is his own exclusive auditor, and since he knows his thoughts, there is no need of speaking them; so no effort is made if they are spoken. Speech specialists recognize that it is easy for the stammerer to say what his auditor already knows. Dr. Bryant points out the frequent occurrence in which the stammerer cannot say his name until after he has given his auditor his card.

Item 3 of the triad states the fact that, under apparently the same circumstances, the stammerer will stammer and then say the word without stammering. The explanation is that the stammerer will stammer when his speech is uppermost in his mind, because he will make a conscious effort to talk, but he will not stammer when he is distracted from his speech, for then normal speech will assert itself.

Denhart, after showing how fear paralyses action says: "Supported by the analogies mentioned, we can safely state that no objection may be feared to the theory already promulgated,—that stammering is a psychosis having its origin in some more or less casual incident in the history of the patient. This psychosis is based upon a delusion, an absolutely unfounded belief that there exists an impediment to the free use of speech. This delusion wreaks havoc with the different innervations requisite for oral speech. Neither the expression 'fear' (*Schranck*) nor the term 'doubt' (*Wyneken*) is applicable to this delusion, for when the delusion arises there is no doubt, but subjective certainty; that this certainty is not always accompanied by such feelings of malaise (*Unlustgefühle*) as would justify one in speaking of 'lallophobia' or 'speech fear'. These feelings of malaise are secondary, being induced by the delusion,—which naturally enough gives rise to painful experiences. One might regard stammering as one of the manifold forms of hypochondria if the symptoms of the latter affection were delusions concerning bodily disabilities, rather than 'fear and anxiety for the body itself.' Should the revived memory picture possess sufficient clearness and intensity to awaken feelings of anxiety and fear, and should its fatal influence not be neutralized by reason or by an unwavering faith in one's own faculties, then there steps in for a second time bewilderment and delay to wreak havoc with the movements that should give oral

expression to thought. The incident will be repeated, and with every repetition the disturbances find an easier victory. The anxiety rising from the recollection has shown itself to be well founded. Any dubiety as to its foundation, which might at first have appeared, is silenced by the seemingly incontrovertible evidence of fact. Forthwith there disappears anxiety—care lest there should recur those unhappy disturbances with which the malady began—and in its stead there prevails the subjective certainty that the stammerer no longer has unimpeded use of speech. Thus there is established the delusional belief that any attempt to speak is frustrated by an actual impediment; though this impediment has in truth no existence outside the imagination of the now fully developed stammerer. This belief, with the concomitant feelings of malaise (at times weaker and at times stronger) is thenceforth the invariable cause of stammering.” (Quoted from Bluemel.) I had never heard of this explanation until I saw it in Bluemel’s book on March 2, 1915. After one wonders at Denhart’s foresight, the next wonder is that such a wealth of truth as is in these remarks should have been left dormant instead of used to emancipate the stammerers. However, the description is faulty in considering the original disability a delusion instead of a fact, in considering the impediment a delusion, and in lack of an explanation of the manner in which havoc is wrought with the movements that should give oral expression to thought. That the original disability which caused the conviction of disability is not a delusion is readily seen from consideration of the circumstances. Take the case in which a child has acquired the habit of repeating words, that is to say, stuttering. This is a simple habit, as is proved by the fact that admonition to talk slowly will stop it. This simple habit stage may run for weeks. Since the parents do not notice it, naturally the child does not, until ridicule brings it to notice so forcibly that a conscious effort is made to overcome it. The child suddenly finds that its speech is sufficiently peculiar to cause strangers to laugh at it. How then can it be said that the child is suffering under a delusion of inability to talk? Such a claim is utterly groundless. It could only be made on the circumlocution that the child should have realized that it was stuttering, and that this could be corrected by deliberation. And to expect such maturity in the child is to exhibit infantility.

The same conclusion holds for the cases in which stammering is induced by shock, fright or illness. The broken speech of persons recovering from severe nervous stress is too much of a fact to be called a delusion.

Bluemel quotes the following incident: "H. Schmidt recalls a case in which a hussar was kicked by a horse on the left side of the forehead, and suffered as a consequence from aphasia, deafness in the left ear, and paralysis of the right arm. Gradually the aphasia disappeared and stammering took its place. After four weeks his full vocabulary returned, but the stammering persisted." Bluemel adds: "Many such cases are on record in which stammering has begun as aphasia." The explanation is that the recovering invalid, noticing an actual disability in his speech, makes a conscious effort at speech and adds stammering to the original disability, which latter gradually disappears but leaves the stammering in its place.

Denhart says of the stammering subsequent to the beginning: "Thus there is established the delusional belief that any attempt to speak is frustrated by an actual impediment. . . ." This is not a delusion; speech is impeded by a force which is just as much a fact as the force with which one locomotive collides with another; the muscular effort of automatic speech collides with the misdirected muscular effort of conscious speech. Although Denhart failed to observe the opposition of the muscular effort, he did recognize some opposition, for he says: "An examination of the mental processes during stammering shows that the disturbance takes the form of a struggle between two opposing forces,—the will, which endeavors to translate the thought into spoken words, and the belief in one's inability to accomplish what is intended." In other words, Denhart transposes the struggle from the muscles of speech to the mental speech processes. Suppose that the mental struggle resulted in a deadlock. Then no muscular effort would have occurred. But stammering is always characterized by a muscular effort. So Denhart shows by this last quoted statement that he not only failed to recognize the true explanation of stammering, but he failed to recognize its most characteristic manifestation, namely, abortive muscular effort. This alleged contest in the mind helps to the interpretation of the statements, ". . . wrecks havoc with the different innervations requisite for oral speech," and ". . . wreak havoc with the movements that should give oral expression to thought." The meaning is the old *lack* of co-ordination, but no such lack will explain stammering. Its phenomena show, especially by their rapid changes, that normal speech must be ready always, and that the impediment must be a surplusage, not a lack. The surplusage is the misdirected conscious effort.

Why the Stammerer Has No Difficulty in Singing.—The fact that the stammerer can sing what he thinks he cannot say, indicates the presence of one or more features in singing which obviate stammering. Bearing in mind that stammering is a conscious effort at speech, let us see if we can discover what there is in singing and not in talking which avoids this conscious effort.

1. Intonation would not seem to have any advantage. The stammerer talks best in the low registers, but singing includes the whole register, so altogether it seems to offer no advantage in that regard.

2. Measure appears to have some advantage in overcoming stammering, as the almost universal practice of time-beating to cure stammering seems to show; the greater part of the advantage is undoubtedly distraction, but it would be unwise to deny any efficacy to the time-beat until proof is available.

3. Gradual start. This certainly tends to allay stammering, for it discourages the convulsive actions which are characteristic of stammering.

4. Continuity of sound. This also decreases the danger of stammering, for the start is always the most difficult for the stammerer, and continuity reduces the number of starts to a minimum.

5. The accented vowel. This is also a discourager of stammering. The vowel is the base of speech, just as the foundation is the base of the house. It is simpler to produce the vowel than the articulated word, just as it is simpler to lay the foundation than to build the whole house. The nearer the stammerer stays to the vowels the less likely he is to stammer.

Evidently, the gradual start, the accented vowel, and the continuity of sound are the important features of singing which obviate stammering. Probably the measure also contributes.

Why Fatigue Makes Stammering Worse.—Since stammering is a conflict between automatic and conscious speech, and since the conscious speech is more thoroughly under the control of the will, automatic speech gives way before the determined efforts to talk. Moreover, the thoughts of the tired individual revert to his troubles, and especially to his physical ailments. Consequently the stammerer will think of his impediment more when he is tired than when he is not, and this self-consciousness will increase his speech difficulty.

Why Consonants At the End of a Word Never Occasion Difficulty.—I have copied that question, but would like to restate it: Why do final consonants apparently never cause difficulty? The observation of stammering phenomena has not reached such a stage of perfection that we are in a safe position to say that stammering never occurs on a particular combination. We are in a much safer position when we select some combination on which stammering has been observed to occur and reason from that, than when we reason from something which we have not known to happen, but which might have happened. However, everyone conversant with the subject will admit that stammering on a final consonant is very rare. The explanation is that by the time the stammerer is near the final consonant he is talking normally, and having said most of the word, he cannot reasonably fear to say the last of it. So he simply leaves his normal speech undisturbed, and it finishes as well as it would have begun if he had not interfered in the beginning.

Why the Stammerer Can Usually Repeat Fluently the Words that Are Pronounced for Him by Another Person by Way of Assistance.—Suppose the words had not been pronounced for him. Then he would be burdened by a sense of the responsibility concerning the information to be imparted, and fear of inability to impart it would prompt him to make a conscious effort to speak, and he would stammer. The absence of that responsibility would, of course, make him less interested in what he had to say, so that he would say it more readily. The condition is similar to that in which a stammerer, failing to say his name, starts to write it and then says it before he has quite finished writing it. Before I knew what mussels looked like, I one day passed a fish market in the company of a stammering companion, and asked him what they were. He hesitated, then flexed his arm, pointed to his biceps muscle, and said "mussels." The idea was that after I knew what he wanted to say he could say it. This is only one of the tantalizing features of stammering, failure to say a thing until there is no need of saying it, and then ability.

Why the Stammerer Speaks Fluently in Concert with Other People.—Stammering is induced by fear of inability to talk. This fear prompts the conscious effort which blocks normal speech. Therefore if the stammerer does not fear that he cannot talk he will not make the conscious effort at speech, his normal speech will assert itself, and he will talk. No

fear assails him when he talks in concert, because he knows that his voice will not be missed even if he does stammer.

The Stammering Cure.—The divergent opinions regarding the efficacy of stammering cures are one of the sure indications of the inefficacy of practically the whole lot of them. But another indication is the pessimistic utterances of those who know and who are honest enough to tell the truth. Whether we accept Bluemel's report of an investigation showing possibly 2% of cures by the schools, or Dr. Makuen's opinion of possible 10%, the figures are sufficiently low to justify the general impression that it is incurable. Someone may say that 10% of cures would make such a conclusion impossible; and so it would, if one-tenth of the stammerers could count that they would be the ones to be cured. But the cures cannot be foretold. Any one stammerer might be among the lucky tenth, but we can have no assurance of it. This is an illuminating fact, for it shows that the cures are accidental. Nearly every cured stammerer is sure that he knows what cured him until he tries that knowledge on others and finds that it does not work, except in so few cases that they are negligible.

But there is one grand, infallible cure. And whose would it be but Mother Nature's? Would she close the cut or join the broken bone and refuse to correct the halting speech? She is not so partial. She stands and has stood since man learned to talk, proffering, urging her remedy; and curing all who took it. But man in his blindness has apparently never seen this great work. He has been too busy at his task of devising futile remedies of his own. What cures he has made have resulted because they happened to contain some portion of Mother Nature's principle. Who does not recall a stammering youth who is now a fluent man? I know an elderly pharmacist who is as fluent as any man, yet some years ago he was prompted by my defective speech to tell me of his difficulties with stammering. He said that he had outgrown it entirely, except that when he was very tired he noticed a tendency to recurrence.

I know another man in his prime who told me to my great surprise that he stammered. I could hardly believe him, for I had been with him much and had not noticed any peculiarity of speech. He explained, however, that he had stammered as a boy, but had so far outgrown it that he feared only two words. One word was not in common use, and the other was the name of a railroad station on a route which he occasionally traveled. When he was going to stop there, he always told the conductor to take out mileage to

the next station beyond, to avoid the necessity of speaking the name of his destination. The improvement in my own speech during one part of my life was so gratifying that I counted on a cure within a few years, until a relapse set in that put me back to hopelessness.

I recall now having been told often by people who heard me stammer that they had stammered once but that the trouble had disappeared. At that time I did not think that their recovery really constituted a cure, although a long one; so I did not pay sufficient attention to record or remember the names of the persons, much less to inquire for the explanation of their recovery. However, we now have the explanation of all such cures, although the personal experiences would have been valuable for confirmation.

Let us forget for the time being that we know what stammering is. Some readers may not accept the statement that stammering is a conscious effort at speech clashing with the normal speech, and it would not be fair to exclude those persons from the discussion of the cure because of their difference of opinion. We will start on the common ground of the past that fright causes stammering. For our further information call in Chervin's triad again.

1. Begins in childhood.
2. Absent in singing and solitude.
3. Intermittent.

From the third item of the triad we see that the stammerer does some correct talking as well as some stammering. Suppose he stammered only once a year. Before the year was over he would forget to be frightened, and then normal speech would assert itself, and he would be cured. This is an extreme case; but it shows the principle, namely the prevalence of correct speech over incorrect speech. When the correct speech builds up more confidence than the incorrect speech knocks down the stammering will decrease, and if the process is continued long enough, free speech will entirely assert itself.

I do not know how this principle was brought to the deliverance of the pharmacist; but I do know that my friend who stammered on only two words had been a traveling man for years; and in my own case the period of marked improvement began when I started writing anything I feared to say, and the progress was greatest when I also traveled as a salesman of knitting machinery and did much talking. To the natural question which a non-stammerer will ask, "How could you talk?" I will answer that my chief difficulty was with the introduction, but I got around that by using a card,

or by writing what I wanted to say. Greetings and the weather were the next topics, and they did not trouble me much. The weather is so easy for the stammerers that it is a wonder that they have not long ago worn it out. Real business was more difficult, but by that time I was beginning to feel at home, so I generally explained that I stammered, and would need more time than usual. The time was always granted, so I managed to get along by dint of frequent word substitution. Quotations were a bugbear to me, but they should always be made in writing, and of course I was glad that they should, for that relieved me of the feeling that I ought to try to say them. By such management I got along with increasing smoothness. Moreover, I made it a practice to talk to my side partner on the train, if he was disposed to talk. I avoided difficult words in such conversations and managed to get much free talking with but very little stammering. That answers the question of my ability to talk. Regarding the improvement of my friend, it seems that his exercise in comparatively free speech during his traveling must have been the main feature in his cure. As to my improvement, it is certain that the considerable amount of unembarrassed talking that I did and the writing of difficult words, both contributed to my improvement; for when I ceased traveling and went into an office where I had little talking to do, and practically all of that under embarrassing conditions, my speech rapidly deteriorated.

So both theory and practice show that the prevalence of correct talking over incorrect talking will cure stammering. Moreover, a little consideration will show that no other cure is possible. Memory is the connecting link in stammering; its retention of the last trouble prompts the effort which causes the next trouble, and so the chain of trouble is forged. Memory can be subdued for a time. It can be made subservient to the suggestion of the mesmerist, and perfect speech will result, but when the subject comes back to his own suggestions, memory revives the past failures to cause new ones. The only way to defeat the vigilant memory is to so crowd it with successes in talking that the failures have no room. Then the stammerer is cured. Confidence will do much to overcome stammering, but it will not entirely overcome the memory of failures.

The slowness of nature's cure is its only drawback. Everything else is highly satisfactory; no cost; no difficulty; no removal to strange surroundings with the danger of relapse on return; no interruption of occupation. But even the length of time required may be reduced by merely assisting nature in obvious ways; such as resolutely substituting writ-

ing for stammering, and by seeking and improving opportunities for free speech, such as walks with a congenial friend.

Women Acquire Stammering as Much as Men Do.—The manifestations of stammering in women are the same as in men. Through all the long list of peculiarities no difference is found; begins in childhood subsequent to the age of speech acquisition; absent in singing and solitude; intermittent; increases with fear; increases with fatigue; decreases with happiness; ceases under mesmeric suggestion, etc., etc. The causes, namely, stuttering, imitation, fright, shock and illness, are the same. Its severity is no less in women, and some cases are outgrown, as in men. The conclusion would naturally be, then, that women would acquire stammering as much as men do. Then a further conclusion that they have nearly all been cured, would be necessary; because the men stammerers are to the women stammerers as 9 to 1, according to Colombat, Gutzmann, and Cöen, as reported by David Greene. It has been customary to consider that women are nearly immune to stammering in order to account for the discrepancy in the numbers of stammerers in the two sexes. But such a position is illogical in view of the facts already cited—namely that every feature except disparity in numbers shows coincidence; therefore coincidence in numbers should not be abandoned for a less likely explanation. The writers on the subject, with one accord, seem to have taken the illogical explanation, namely immunity from stammering instead of correction after it was contracted. Certainly some women have outgrown the disorder, so it would be necessary only for a large number to outgrow it in order to account for the disparity. The large number of cures in girls compared with boys is readily accounted for on the principle already explained of the prevalence of correct speech over incorrect speech by the fact that the girl stays at home where she gets correction and ample opportunity for free speech, but the boy roams away from the house where he gets neither of these helping influences, but does get the ridicule that makes his stammering worse.

But before we consider the explanations why women are supposed to be immune, let us consider the evidence on which immunity is assumed. Certainly there are comparatively few women stammerers, both according to common observation and statistics. But both our observation and statistics are mostly from the beginning of the child's schooling up to maturity. The period from the time of speech acquisition to the beginning of schooling is sufficient for the cure of many cases of stammering without observation; for parents understand stammering even less than the speech

specialists do, and even the specialists have overlooked much that is of value during that period. The failure to observe that stuttering is a cause of stammering, is an illustration of this oversight. Moreover, the principle by which nature cures stammerers has certainly not been common knowledge, so the possibility of any cures, and especially quick ones, would not occur to the observer. Needless to say it would not occur to those who deny such cures.

Summing up this evidence we see that it is purely negative; it does not show that women are more immune than men, and it does not show that the girls who might have stammered have not been cured. Of course one or the other alternative must be true, for no third explanation is possible. But those who select the immunity explanation take an untenable position because the fact that stammering is in every other particular alike in men and women is presumptive evidence that it is alike in regard to the numbers which contract it.

In support of the explanation by cures of most of the women stammerers we have the certainty of some cures by the process of outgrowing, and the logical explanation of the possibility of many cases outgrowing the disorder on account of the favorable environment of the girl.

On the contrary the theory that women are immune has hardly a leg to stand on. It has no positive evidence that they have not contracted stammering as extensively as men do. The belief in immunity was adopted as apparently the only explanation of the absence of women stammerers of school age and older; but it has been shown that the more reasonable explanation of a large number of stammering cures in girls must be disproved before the immunity theory has a basis for existence.

Suppose, however, we assume immunity in women and see where it leads us. Some women are certainly not immune, so the immunity must be a respecter of persons, unless we take the ground that the few women stammerers are those who were least immune. But in that case the disorder should show less virulence in women. On the contrary women stammer just as severely as men do. Consequently the idea of general, although incomplete, immunity must be abandoned. The immunity must be absolute for some and nil for others. This requirement adds to the already serious difficulty in supporting this imaginary hypothesis.

The explanations of the immunity idea have generally been arguments drawn from the fact to be proved; the reasoning has been, women stammer less than men, therefore they are more immune than men. Such arguments are not per-

missible to show immunity, but it is permissible to show that women are more immune to other similar disorders, and to reason by analogy that they are immune to stammering for the same reasons.

The fact that women are less subject to color blindness than men has been cited to account for immunity of women to stammering. But neither the causes nor the cure of color blindness are known, and the explanations of it are only hypothetical. On the contrary, we do know the causes of stammering, both the inducing causes and the continuing causes, and we know the cure; and we find that girls are as much exposed to the causes, that they have the requisite mentality to make them susceptible,—that is, to make an effort to talk when they find difficulty in talking—and that they are kept within range of the curative influences, namely correction and opportunity for free speech. We do not know that women are exposed to the causes of color blindness, for we do not know what those causes are. And in general, the two disorders are so dissimilar that analogies cannot be drawn safely. Stammering is known both to the victim and to the public; but color blindness is almost never known to either except as the result of a careful examination.

The argument that man has greater variability than woman, specifically that the geniuses and the idiots are of the male sex, especially on the score of a 9 to 1 ratio of men to women, will certainly find opposition from the women, except, possibly, the idiot item. However, leaving such generalities, we can come to the specific characteristic in either man or woman which makes stammering not only possible but imperative, and that is to try to do what one wants to do. No one will say that this characteristic is less prominent in women than in men. All the talk about different mentality, which was excusable when stammering was considered to be caused by a mental defect or by a characteristic lack of logic, must be abandoned in view of the fact that the stammerer has no mental defect, and that his logic is perfect.

The Extirpation of Stammering.—Most books on stammering are written with the view of curing the individual stammerer or of promoting some particular method. The object of this book is the total abolition of stammering. This object can be accomplished by an educational campaign much less extensive than many popular campaigns to eradicate human ills. Society should stop stammering both on its own account and on the stammerer's account.

The way to stop stammering is to stop it. Some may

think that such a procedure would make the poor stammerer dumb. To an extent they are right. For a time he would be partially dumb; but every stammerer does some correct talking, and that correct talking ultimately gives him the impression that he can talk. Then he is cured; for it is only the belief that he cannot talk which makes him stammer. But how about the stammerers who are in positions where they have to talk? Provision should be made for them to write, or they should be given other work.

Although the principle of the cure has been described thoroughly, the proposal to abolish stammering without the consent of the stammerer sounds so revolutionary that more explanation may be needed.

There is only one way by which stammering can be cured, namely, by the prevalence of correct speech over incorrect speech to the extent that the stammerer believes he can talk. This is nature's cure; but it is very slow, because nature cannot make the stammerer write when he fears to talk, neither can she make him seek opportunities in which he talks with the most freedom. Society can shorten nature's cures wonderfully by saying to the stammerer "We must decline to listen if you stammer; take the time to compose yourself, or write what you have to say." The chances are that he would compose himself and talk, or would start to write, become composed thereby, and say the rest without trouble. So a double gain would be made; not only would he retain the confidence which he would have lost by stammering, but he would add to his confidence by talking instead of writing. Some will say that the stammerer has a right to stammer, if he wants to. But that is not so. Society's duty is to protect itself from contagion and against incompetents, and the stammerer is certainly in that class. Also, society is culpable if it is accessory to the continuance of incompetency, and it is so when it allows stammering. The stammerer always has an accessory, for he does not stammer when he is alone. Society can and should decline to be a party to the encouragement of a disorder which is damaging to all concerned. Finally the stammerer does not really want to stammer. He may think that he wants to say the particular word which stops him for the time being, but he is merely suffering under the ludicrous delusion that it is more humiliating to write what he has to say than to stammer it, and he forgets that he is being cured when he stops stammering. Every time a stammerer resists the impulse to stammer, whether he waits until he can speak freely or whether he writes, he is on the way to recovery. If he is so deluded that he cannot see his own best interest, that

is all the more reason why society should take care of him; precedents are not lacking.

The question will arise, "What is to become of the speech specialist?" He need not worry. Except that he will have to put his apparatus and his vocal charts up in the attic, he should do a rushing business for a time. But when the present confirmed stammerers have been cured, his occupation will certainly be gone if society does her simple and easy duty in regard to stammering.

Let us try again to make the matter clear. Society is positively not to go into the business of curing stammering. That would require the giving of special instruction which it is unable to give. Society is merely to decline to listen to stammering. When the stammerer stops stammering, his normal speech will assert itself, he will forget to make the effort that causes stammering and in time he will be cured. Then no more stammering can occur, for the simple reason that no one will listen to it. To summarize, society is merely to assist the natural cures by declining to listen to stammering; her attitude is to be merely negative; the positive instruction for the correction of stammering is to be done by those who are trained in the work. Indeed, where society has entered the work by establishing instruction for the stammering school children, it has done more harm than good, because most modern methods make stammering worse.

This disorder, which has baffled science until now, is probably the easiest to vanquish. The citadel which resisted every means of attack, now that its secret is known, is found to be vulnerable on all sides, and if it is not completely razed to the ground within a very few years society will be guilty of criminal carelessness.

The declination to listen to stammering will completely abolish it within a few years; so it is probably unique for the ease of its eradication; no medicine, no surgery, no skill except for the chronic cases which will seek individual cures or cure themselves or die off. Its termination is as easy as its existence has been persistent.

The proper public attitude in regard to stammering is the first requisite; and that is to treat the stammerer as the lame man is treated. The public foresees his needs and courteously steps in and supplies them. If he wants to make a difficult crossing they take his arm and help him along. If a miscreant kicks his crutch out from under him they promptly pummel the miscreant. They should be as thoughtful to see the stammerer's needs, and should make it just as dangerous to exhibit impatience toward a stammerer as it is to kick the lame man's crutch out from under him, because

the cases are identical; each is a helpless unfortunate, and the treatment confirms his difficulty. It will not be enough to stop open ridicule; the principal obstacle is supercilious impatience, so often exhibited by clerks and public officials. The public can safely say, "We can afford to devote a little time to stopping stammering in view of the big gain in time that will accrue from its abolition." One of the most exasperating things about stammering is the extent to which mistaken feelings aggravate it; the stammerer feels that he will be ridiculed; he feels that he will not be allowed time enough; and the public feels that he is to blame. Stammering would be reduced in intensity one-half if these largely mistaken feelings were removed; and they can be removed by making the stammerer "at home" in regard to his speech when he is abroad. All that is necessary is public knowledge that the stammerer always has the ability to talk, and the disposition to gladly give him all the time he needs, or to wait until he writes.

Little children will be largely instrumental in stopping stammering. One of the time worn nursery rhymes may be displaced by a little rhyme that relates our duty toward the stammerer. No foolish hesitancy will prevent the use of that information. The child that has it will promptly tell the stammering child that he should not stammer, but should wait until he can talk. If the numerous juvenile publications would print a little sane advice about stammering instead of some of the fairy tales, stammering would be checked almost at its inception.

Mothers occupy the best position for preventing stammering. Only a little education about the disorder would enable them to stop it at the very start. The mothers who have never had a stammering child do not realize the importance of keeping on the lookout to guard against it. But that makes the opportunity for the mothers who have stammering children. They will quickly grasp the importance of steps which will eradicate the evil, and they should speak right up in the mothers' meetings, or at any other opportune time, and sound the notes both of warning and of rescue. Doctors and nurses should be required to know the cause and explanation of stammering, the principle of cure, and, at least, the negative means of suppressing it. All teachers, and especially juvenile teachers, should be required to pass an examination in regard to the management of stammering children. This information can be acquired within half an hour, and comprehensive knowledge of it can be shown in a two-hundred word essay; so no teacher fit to teach children would object to the extra labor of acquiring it.

The school authorities should be shown how the oral work is promoting and continuing stammering, so that they will abolish the oral work for the stammerer, and will further see that the stammering child is treated with encouragement and assistance instead of ridicule and derision.

Store keepers should see that their clerks are instructed how to act toward a stammerer. Pure business policy would dictate that. The portraits of the clerks who were hateful to me come to my mind vividly now, although many of them are in their graves. They never knew what humiliation and suffering their unkindness stirred up in a child's heart. The only detail of one place that I can remember is the lowering face of one clerk who used to snarl, "Why don't they send someone here who can talk?" His piercing black eyes, and his gaunt, unshaven muzzle come right up before me as though I had last seen him yesterday, instead of nearly forty years ago; and I have not tried to remember him either. When my father would tell me to go to that place, I wished all the way there that the earth would open and swallow me.

All who come in contact with the public, such as policemen, conductors, ticket agents, etc., should be instructed how to treat the stammerer. The stammerer walks needless miles during his life, just to avoid asking directions to his unfamiliar destinations. On a car the stammerer will risk a long walk rather than the humiliation of a curt remark from the conductor if he falters in saying his destination. Credit is due a large proportion of public service employees for the sincere "Take your time," with which they assist the stammerer; but generally that comes after the latter has failed to say what he wanted to say, and has been obliged to ask for time. The policeman and the ticket agent should learn to recognize stammering just as the bank teller learns to recognize faces. But that recognition should not be accompanied with any sign of impatience, curiosity, or contempt. I have often approached a policeman in a strange city to ask directions, and although his general demeanor has been perfectly polite, his covert but intense glance at my lips to see what contortion I would make next, has been far more confusing than if he had told me to go to the devil.

The telephone companies can do a considerable stroke of business by requiring their operators to treat stammerers intelligently. One day I went into a telephone booth in Amsterdam, N. Y., and took down the receiver. A voice said, "Number." I said nothing, but had nearly composed myself to say what I wanted to say when, "Number," in a sharper tone, upset me altogether. I said, "Central, I have difficulty in talking; won't you give me a little time?"

A sweet voice came back, "I beg your pardon; I did not understand; take all the time you want; I'll wait." I gave the number, and delivered my message swimmingly. Then, with tears in my eyes, I thanked that girl from the bottom of my heart, and went away happy. I do not know any more about her than I have told here, but she will be an angel to me as long as I have recollection. Every telephone girl can be an angel to the stammerers; for if the torments of the damned come to earth they come to the poor stammerer stewing in one of those sweat boxes, when his already confused speech is tied up as tight as a drum by an impatient interruption. A word of consolation then is like radiance from heaven. It will make him talk.

Although the stammerer likes to talk, he shuns the telephone, because he generally has trouble with it. The thought that he cannot give the number—for he cannot substitute numbers as he can words—and the further thoughts that he is hurried, that central will be impatient, and that the person whom he is calling may be slow of comprehension, all these disturbing ideas contribute to defeat him from the start. The automatic telephone solves the difficulty of calling up; but the others remain. The operator who understands how to treat stammerers and has a heart can do much to solve the others. Then the telephone, instead of tending to increase stammering, will decrease it.

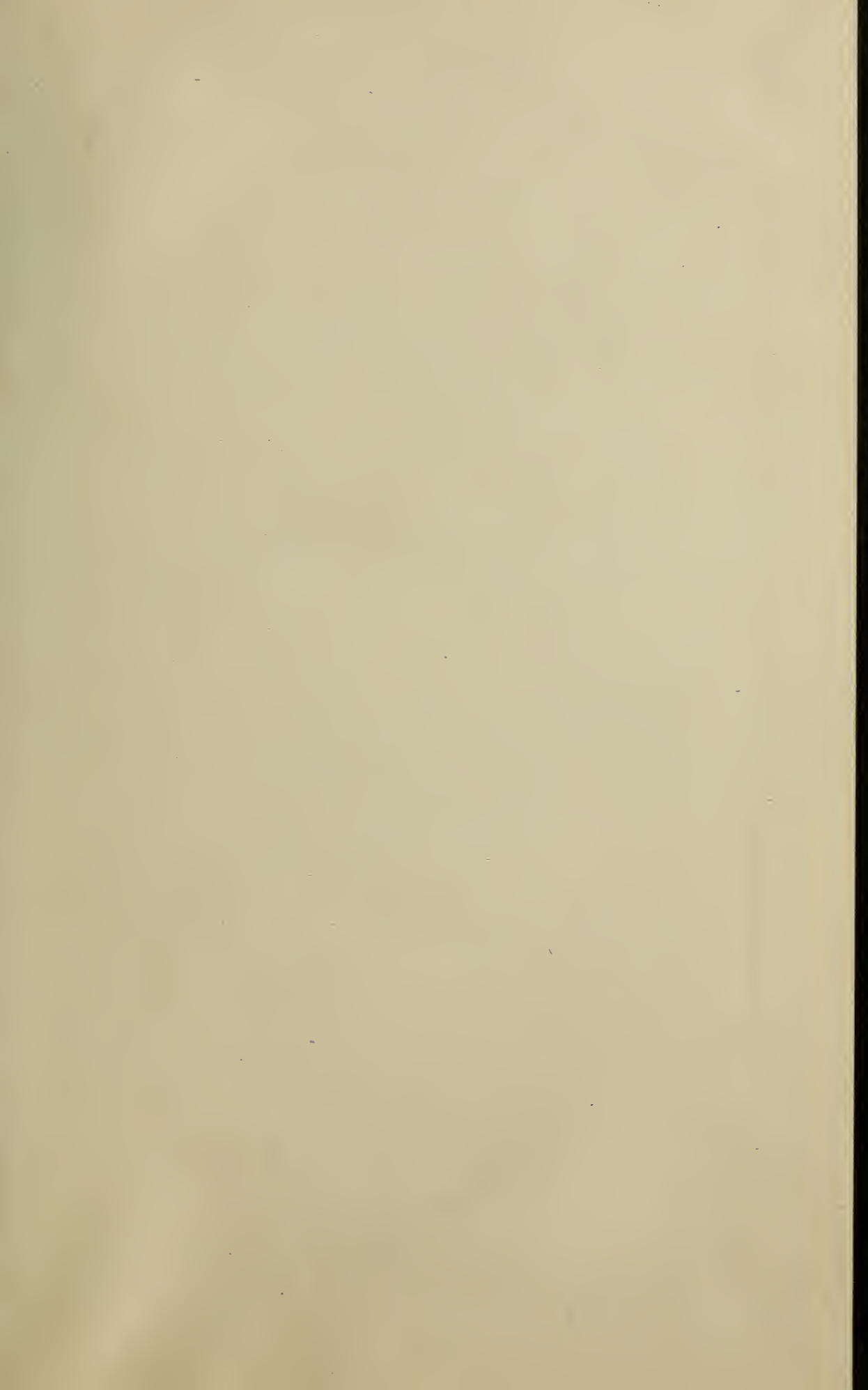
Election officials should be instructed how to deal with the stammerer. Many stammerers never go near the polls for fear of speech trouble there, and those who do go, generally hold election day in anxious anticipation for weeks ahead of its arrival. This is especially true when the stammerer moves to a new locality where he is not well known and where his vote may be challenged.

The courts should provide that the testimony of a stammering witness be taken in writing. The testimony will certainly be more reliable, for no severe stammerer can say exactly what he wants to say. In ordinary conversation he gets along by the use of synonyms, but that should not be permissible in a court of law, for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth cannot be obtained when it is related according to the words that are easiest to say. The prospect of undergoing a severe cross examination in court is a nightmare to the stammerer. There is not the least doubt that the fear which haunts his mind, even when the chances of realization are slight, makes such a deep impression of his trouble that his stammering is increased.

Employers of stammerers can be highly beneficial in suppressing stammering. They should contrive to give the

stammering employe as much opportunity to overcome his trouble as business tempered with generosity will allow. One of those opportunities is the privilege of writing when stammering is inevitable. If the employer will say, "To please me, write instead of stammering," the writing would be done. But if the remark is, "You can write it if you want to," the stammerer is likely to think that he will lose favor if he admits defeat, so he will go down to certain defeat by trying to talk.





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